United Nations

Press Release

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

@ Secretary-General returns to New York; tells correspondents that his 10 September visit to Iran is not related to hostages.

@ Massive United Nations emergency airlift operations -- largest ever -- continue in Horn of Africa.

@ Kuwaiti Army Liaison Office informs United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission about clash between Iraq and Kuwaiti military personnel on Bubiyan Island just outside demilitarized zone; Secretary-General to make report on the incident to the Security Council.

@ Fifth European regional NGO Symposium ends session, calling on all European Governments to support international peace conference on Middle East.

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Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar commented today at headquarters on his current efforts to free the remaining hostages held in Lebanon and Israel saying that he expected something to happen during the next few weeks. He told correspondents at Headquarters that he was continuing his quiet efforts and that things were moving ahead.

On a question about his visit to Iran on 10 September, the Secretary-General replied it was not related to the hostage situation but that he would be discussing the situation of prisoners of war held since the Iran-Iraq conflict ended in 1988, and questions relating to the situation in Afghanistan.

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In one of the largest emergency food airlifts ever operated by the United Nations, the World Food Programme (WFP) is continuing to use a total of nine airplanes for round-the-clock flights to deliver more that 10,000 metric tonnes of food aid per month to people in the Horn of Africa.

(more)

For information media—not an official record

The airlifts into Sudan and Ethiopia began at the end of July and have so far delivered almost 7,000 metric tonnes of emergency food aid. While there are an estimated 8 million people in need of food assistance in Ethiopia, the airlift is aimed at the 1.2 million refugees and returnees in the Ogaden region and the 300,000 demobilized former soldiers in Tigre. In Sudan, the airlifts are reaching people in the south who have returned from Ethiopia, and others cut off by fighting. Airlifts are also reaching people in the north who are otherwise inaccessible.

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A United Nations spokesman said today that the Kuwaiti Army Liaison Office yesterday had informed United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM) about a clash between Iraqi and Kuwaiti personnel on the eastern shore of a small island, Bubiyan, 3 kilometres outside the demilitarized zone. UNIKOM immediately contacted the Iraqi Liaison Office and prepared for a reconnaisance by air. This was delayed by weather conditions and then by a warning from the Kuwaiti army liaison that Kuwaiti aircraft were engaging Iraqi personnel in the area of the incident.

Speaking to correspondents, the Secretary-General said that the situation was now under control and that he would issue a report on the incident to the Security Council.

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Participants in the Fifth United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine have called on all European Governments to support the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. They also strongly affirmed that the Palestinian people must be represented by their chosen representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Concluding a two-day meeting in Vienna on Tuesday, the Symposium declared that it was crucially important for all European Governments to play a more active role in securing a settlement of the Middle East conflict. They rejected Israel's attempt to decide which Palestinians should be involved in international gatherings concerned with peace, as well as that Government's attempts to interfere with Palestinian representation.

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